“In social work, the signature pedagogy is field education.”

Council on Social Work Education
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I. Introduction
Field Practicum is a critical component of Boise State University School of Social Work’s BSW and MSW programs. The Council on Social Work Education emphasizes that fieldwork is the “signature pedagogy” of social work education. Through field education students develop social work competencies and practice behaviors under the supervision of an experienced social worker.

The ideal field placement offers students a focus on the methods of direct practice, policy development and implementation, and other social work special projects and research activities. It is expected that students will experience a diversity of client populations and intervention issues, relying upon a range of theoretical concepts and models to develop breadth of learning and to establish a broad base for practice.

Supervised practice in a field agency is central to the development of competent, humane, knowledgeable, skilled, and effective social workers. Field education is the point at which the integration of theory, practice, skills, and ethics come together for emerging social work professionals. As the profession’s “signature pedagogy” it allows opportunities for applying classroom content and experiences to professional situations, developing and evaluating student readiness for professional practice, and developing collaborative partnerships among students, faculty, field agencies, and the University.

Students are encouraged to read the entire Field manual and to keep it handy as a reference throughout their time in the Field Education Program. Current and prospective Agency Field Instructors and their organizations will find the material in this manual helpful in understanding social work education at Boise State University, roles and expectations of parties involved in field education, and relevant policies and procedures.

The word "practicum,” from the Greek and Latin meaning “practical,” has become common terminology for social work internships in an agency intended to facilitate the integration of theory and practice. The terms "field education” and "practicum” are used interchangeably throughout this manual. However, due to the expanding roles of social work practice beyond the clinical or teaching internships for which the term was initially used, we are beginning to replace the somewhat narrow and often unfamiliar word “practicum” with the broader term “field education.”

Mission Statement
The Boise State University School of Social Work prepares BSW graduates for beginning social work practice with individuals and families, groups, organizations and communities and MSW graduates for advanced social work practice with individuals and families. We are committed to human rights, social and economic justice, egalitarianism, and respect for diversity.
Degree Programs
Boise State University School of Social Work has social work programs in Twin Falls, Lewiston, and Coeur d’Alene. If you are a student enrolled in one of these programs, rather than on the main Boise campus – please be advised that the timing and structure of your program (e.g. length of program, schedule and structure of coursework and Field Practicum) may vary from the descriptions provided in this manual. Please refer to your Program Site Coordinator for up to date information for your program.

The Boise State University School of Social Work prepares graduates at two levels:

Level One: The Bachelor of Social Work Program
The Bachelor of Social Work Program consists of an undergraduate liberal arts education; a foundation of social work values, knowledge, professional skills, and use of self for supervised, beginning generalist practice with individuals, families, households, groups, organizations, and communities; and preparation for lifelong learning and graduate education. Graduates of the BSW program must demonstrate beginning professional practice behaviors and competencies by the time of graduation.

Level Two: The Master of Social Work Program
The Master of Social Work Program prepares students for advanced direct practice with individuals and families within the context of varying system sizes (i.e. individuals, families, groups and communities). Students learn clinical, organizational, policy, and administrative skills necessary for promoting social justice and equality, and for enhancing the quality of life for all people.

Non-Discrimination and Equality-of-Opportunity Policy
Boise State University prohibits discrimination in educational and employment opportunities, services, and benefits on the basis of race, national origin, color, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

II. Overview of Field Education
Field Practicum is an experiential course that challenges students to develop and demonstrate social work practice behaviors and competencies within an organizational and community context. Field Practicum is a vital dimension of students’ social work education. In the Field Practicum, students master the lessons of the classroom through interaction with real clients in a supervised agency setting. In social work education, the field practicum is where theory and science join the art of practice. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has stated that field education is the “signature pedagogy” of social work education. Field work provides students with opportunities to apply theory to practice and to develop and practice essential social work skills.
Field Practicum affords experiential assessment and evaluation of students’ development in the process of becoming helping professionals. Students utilize their academic and practice experiences in their work with real clients and agencies. Field Practicum provides students an opportunity to participate in and become familiar with the many components of the social work role. The ideal field placement offers students a focus on the methods of direct practice, policy development and implementation, and other social work special projects and research activities.

Field Practicum provides practice experiences in a continuum of modalities, including work with individuals, families, small groups, and communities within an organizational and community context. It is expected that students will experience a diversity of client populations and intervention issues, relying upon a range of theoretical concepts and models to develop breadth of learning and establish a broad base for practice.

**IPT - Intern Placement Tracking Software**

The Boise State University School of Social Work field program maintains a web-based database and software program called “Intern Placement Tracking,” commonly referred to as “IPT.” Students and Agency Field Instructors will receive login information and training on IPT during their orientation. In addition to training offered at orientation, tutorials and a help section are available within the IPT program. Students and Agency Field Instructors are welcome to contact Field Program staff should they have questions or difficulties with IPT.

IPT is used:

- To house forms used to track and monitor student learning and progress in their Field Practicum (Learning Agreements, Time Sheets, Evaluation Forms).
- To facilitate record sharing and communication between student, Agency Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison, and Field Program staff.
- To house contact and descriptive information on agencies in the area that provide fieldwork opportunities for students.

**Learning Agreement**

As part of Field Practicum students are expected to work collaboratively with their Agency Field Instructor to develop a behaviorally specific learning agreement based on their level in the social work program (BSW, MSW Foundation, MSW Advanced). The learning agreement promotes adult learning and is the blueprint for students to develop and demonstrate social work practice behaviors and competencies.

The Boise State University School of Social Work provides Learning Agreement templates for each level of learning (BSW, MSW Foundation, and MSW Advanced). Learning agreements outline the specific competencies and practice behaviors students are expected to develop over the course of their Field Practicum. Students and Agency Field Instructors should discuss specific learning opportunities, tasks, and assignments available to the student in the agency and
document these in the learning agreement by the end of the fifth week of the practicum. Learning activities should be personalized to student interest, skill level, and to opportunities available in the agency setting. Learning agreements will be reviewed by Faculty Field Liaisons to ensure appropriateness, mutual understanding, and expected outcomes.

It is recommended that students and Agency Field Instructors regularly review the Learning Agreement as part of their weekly supervision meetings. Agency Field Instructors are encouraged to monitor student progress toward development of competencies and are expected to provide constructive feedback to support student learning and professional growth.

At the end of the first semester, students and Agency Field Instructors are expected to review the student’s progress toward goals outlined in the learning agreement and to evaluate progress toward development and mastery of social work practice behaviors and competencies. Students will write a new learning agreement outlining new goals and learning activities for the second semester. This new plan may include first semester learning goals as appropriate.

**Evaluation**

At the end of each semester, students and Agency Field Instructors must complete an evaluation of the student’s progress toward the development of professional competencies and practice behaviors. Examples of the evaluation tools are provided in the Appendix of this manual. Evaluations will be reviewed and discussed with the Faculty Field Liaison during site visits conducted at the end of the first semester and the end of the year. The Faculty Field Liaison issues the final grade of pass/fail for field.

**III. Field Education for Undergraduate Students: Bachelor of Social Work (BSW)**

**Goals of the BSW Program**

1. To educate individuals for supervised beginning generalist practice with individuals, families, households, groups, organizations, and communities through a foundation of social work values, knowledge, professional skills, and use of self; and
2. To prepare individuals for lifelong learning and graduate education.

**Field Education Requirements for BSW Degree**

**Eligibility for Field Practicum**

Students become eligible for Field Practicum based on their progress toward completing the curriculum required to earn the BSW degree. Completion of the following courses is prerequisite or co-requisite for admission to the field practicum.

For students to be eligible for field practicum, they must:
1. Be accepted into candidacy for Social Work degree
2. Have completed or be enrolled in the courses listed below:
   - SOCWRK 301 Social Welfare Policy
   - SOCWRK 320 Human Behavior in Social Environment I
   - SOCWRK 333 Generalist Social Work Practice I: Individuals
   - SOCWRK 380 Social Work Research Methods and Statistics
   - SOCWRK 420 Human Behavior in Social Environment II
   - SOCWRK 444 Generalist Social Work Practice II: Families and Groups or SOCWRK 455 Generalist Social Work Practice III: Organizations and Communities

**BSW Field Hours Requirement:**
Field practicum is the capstone of professional social work education. Students in the BSW program must complete 480 hours of field practice, approximately 16 hours per week. This field experience helps prepare students to enter the work force as beginning professional social work practitioners.

**Organization of Field Practicum and Senior Seminar**
Social Work Field Practicums I & II (SOCWRK 480/481), and their companion Senior Seminars I & II (SOCWRK 498/499), are the capstone courses of the professional social work curriculum.

Field Practicum is organized into two academic courses: SOCWRK 480 (Social Work Field Practicum I), taken in the fall semester of a student’s senior year, and SOCWRK 481 (Social Work Field Practicum II), taken spring semester. Each practicum course accounts for 5 credit hours. Students are in field for 16 clock hours per week to reach a total of the 480 required hours, 240 hours per semester.

Senior Seminar is organized into two academic courses: SOCWRK 498, Senior Seminar I, and SOCWRK 499, Senior Seminar II, for 1 credit hour each. These classes are co-requisites with Field Work I-II, respectively. SOCWRK 498 & SOCWRK 499 are designated as Boise State University’s “Finishing Foundations” courses for social work majors.

Senior Seminar is closely linked to Social Work Field Practicum. The purpose of this course is to facilitate and encourage students’ development as entry-level practitioners through the integration of social work theory, practice, and values. Assignments in Senior Seminar are related to the field experience and the thinking, feeling, and doing of social work practice.

Students are expected to apply knowledge, skills, values, and ethics learned in their academic courses to the practice experiences afforded them in the field agency. The student learning agreement and evaluation tool are used by students, Agency Field Instructors and the Faculty Field Liaison to evaluate student’s progress toward developing professional practice behaviors and competencies.
IV. Field Education for Graduate Students: Master of Social Work (MSW)

Goals of the MSW Program
The Master of Social Work Program prepares students for advanced direct practice with individuals and families within the context of varying system sizes (i.e. individuals, families, groups and communities). Students learn clinical, organizational, policy, and administrative skills necessary for promoting social justice and equality, and enhancing the quality of life for all people.

Field Education Requirements for MSW Degree

MSW Foundation Field Hours Requirement
Students in the first year of the 2-year MSW program are expected to complete 400 clock hours in field, approximately 16 hours per week over two semesters. Students in the Foundation program begin fieldwork after they have completed their initial five weeks of classroom learning. Students are expected to complete 160 field hours during fall semester (16 hours per week for 10 weeks) and 240 hours (16 hours per week for 15 weeks) during spring semester.

Organization of MSW Foundation Field Practicum and Practicum Seminar:
Field Practicum is organized into two academic courses: SOCWRK 570 (Foundation Field Work I, taken in the fall semester) and SOCWRK 572 (Foundation Field Work II, taken spring semester). Each Foundation Field Work course accounts for 2 credit hours. Foundation Practicum Seminar is organized into two academic courses: SOCWRK 573 (Foundation Practicum Seminar I), taken in the fall semester of student’s foundation year, and SOCWRK 574 (Foundation Practicum Seminar II), taken during spring semester. These classes are co-requisites with Foundation Field Work I-II, respectively.

Foundation Practicum Seminar is closely linked to Foundation Field Work. The purpose of the Seminar course is to facilitate and encourage students' development as advanced-level practitioners through the integration of social work theory, practice, and values and the development of social work competencies and practice behaviors. Assignments in Foundation Practicum Seminar are related to the field experience and the thinking, feeling, and doing of social work practice.

MSW Advanced Practicum Requirements
The second year of Field Practicum for Masters students emphasizes specialization related to direct social work practice with individuals and families. The role, function, and structure of the family are a particular focus across service delivery systems/Field Practicum placement sites.
Eligibility for MSW Advanced Field Practicum
In order to be eligible for Advanced Social Work Practicum I and II, the student must have:

1. Achieved second-year status.
2. Maintained a 3.0 grade point average.

MSW Advanced Field Hours Requirement
MSW Advanced students are expected to complete 600 field hours over the course of two semesters, approximately 20 hours per week.

Organization of Advanced Field Practicum and Practicum Seminar:
Advanced Field Practicum is organized into two academic courses: SOCWRK 575 (Advanced Social Work Practicum I, taken in the fall semester) and SOCWRK 576 (Advanced Social Work Practicum II, taken spring semester). Each Field Practicum course accounts for 5 credit hours.

Advanced Practicum Seminar is organized into two academic courses: SOCWRK 577 (Advanced Practicum Seminar I), taken in the fall semester of student’s advanced year, and SOCWRK 578 (Advanced Practicum Seminar II), taken during spring semester. These classes are co-requisites with Advanced Field Practicum I-II, respectively.

Advanced Field Practicum Seminar is closely linked to Advanced Field Practicum. The purpose of the Seminar course is to facilitate and encourage students’ development as advanced-level practitioners through the integration of social work theory, practice, and values and the development of social work competencies and practice behaviors. Assignments in Advanced Practicum Seminar are related to the field experience and the thinking, feeling, and doing of social work practice.

V. Roles and Responsibilities of Involved Parties

Director and Associate Director of Field Education
The Director and Associate Directors of Field Education have primary responsibility for the Field Practicum Program. Students work directly with Field Education staff concerning matters of placement. The Director & Associate Director develop and monitor practicum sites, provide training to agencies and Agency Field Instructors, and are available upon request to meet with students and Agency Field Instructors regarding concerns that arise in Field.

External Program Site Coordinators
Boise State University has social work programs in Twin Falls, Lewiston, and Coeur d’Alene. Program Site Coordinators are responsible for developing field placement sites in their areas, assisting external program students with field placement, and addressing problems or concerns that may arise for external program students in field.
Field Agencies
Social service agencies and their staff play an important role in the Boise State University Field program. Agencies must meet the following criteria in order to be approved placement sites for students.

1. The agency should be an established program that has community and professional sanction. (Sanction includes, but is not limited to, one of the following: program accreditation by a professional licensing body, employer of Licensed Social Workers, recipient of a grant from a governmental body or foundation, longevity of program, operation under auspices of a Board of Directors, has established accountability procedures.)

2. The agency may not have exclusionary policies or practices that discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, religion, sexual orientation, or national origin.

3. The Agency should provide ethical and professional social work services with an emphasis on evidence-based practice. Agencies and Agency Field Instructors are expected to follow the NASW Code of Ethics and requirements of the Idaho Board of Social Work Examiners.

4. The agency understands the placement of Practicum students is designed primarily to develop skills in students and secondarily to enhance agency services. Agency staff should provide students with learning experiences and meaningful tasks that will support the development of social work skills and competencies. Increasingly complex tasks should be assigned as students gain confidence and competence.

5. The agency must agree that all student work will be supervised directly by Agency employees.

6. The agency must provide for a Licensed BSW or MSW employee who meets Agency Field Instructor requirements to serve as the student’s Agency Field Instructor. If the agency does not have a qualified Agency Field Instructor available who meets Agency Field Instructor Requirements outlined in this manual, the agency may designate an “Agency Task Supervisor” to oversee the day-to-day activities of the student. The agency will need to hire or use a BSW or MSW from another part of the agency to serve as the student’s Agency Field Instructor to help with social work integration. The Agency Field Instructor must also be accessible to the student by telephone and meet with the student and the Agency Task Supervisor a minimum of one hour weekly, to plan and implement the student’s learning goals and objectives.

7. The agency will not change Agency Field Instructors without the consent of Boise State University’s Director of Field Education.

8. The agency should provide the student with a physical place to work within the agency setting and with necessary supplies for their work (desk, supplies, telephone, support services).

9. The agency must provide mileage compensation if assignments require more travel than to and from field agency site.
10. The agency will provide an orientation for students covering rules, regulations, procedures, facilities, and equipment of the agency.

11. The agency agrees to follow the Boise State University Field Problem Solving Policy should concerns arise about a student’s performance in field.

12. A representative from the agency must sign an affiliation agreement which outlines agency and school responsibilities. The process of securing and storing affiliation agreements will be facilitated by Boise State University field program staff.

**Faculty Field Liaison**
Faculty Field Liaisons are Boise State University faculty members who teach Field Practicum Seminar and oversee the field education of the students in their seminar class. Faculty Field Liaisons are expected to:

1. Assist students with setting appropriate learning goals and developing a learning agreement.
2. Foster a safe atmosphere during seminar to discuss challenges, concerns, client issues, and field experiences.
3. Regularly review student’s time sheets to ensure hour requirements are being met and that students are engaging in meaningful learning activities that will assist them in development of professional social work practice behaviors and competencies.
4. Assist with problem solving if/as concerns arise in field placement.
5. Conduct a minimum of three site visits over the course of the year.
   - An initial site visit should occur by the end of the fifth week of the student’s practicum. This initial visit focuses on discussion of student learning opportunities in the agency and the student’s learning agreement.
   - End of first semester visit: This visit focuses on the student’s progress in field and should include a review of the first semester evaluation and discussion of new goals for second semester.
   - End of year visit: This visit provides the student, Faculty Field Liaison, and Agency Field Instructor to reflect on the student’s successes over the course of the year, to review the Final Field Evaluation, and to discuss student’s readiness for professional practice.
6. Complete site visit form for each visit to document student progress and any concerns or recommendations that were discussed.
7. Monitor and evaluate student performance in field and Field Practicum Seminar.

**Agency Field Instructor**
Agency Field Instructors are approved supervisors with a field agency who assume responsibility for supervising and monitoring student progress, assigning tasks to the student, and assisting the student in integrating theory and practice. Agency Field Instructors are critical role models and
provide important feedback to students to assist them with learning and applying social work skills, and with development of professional self.

Agency Field Instructors must:

- Be licensed social workers (LSW license or higher to supervise BSW students and MSW license or higher to supervise MSW students).
- Have graduated from an accredited CSWE School with a BSW or MSW degree in social work.
- Have at least two years of post-graduation professional practice experience commensurate with level of supervisee (e.g. BSW, MSW).
- Have been employed in current position for at least six months prior to becoming a field instructor.
- Be willing to support Boise State University program objectives for student learning.

Agency Field Instructors are expected to:

1. Complete and submit Agency Field Instructor Verification Form (see Forms section of manual).
2. Attend Boise State University Agency Field Instructor Orientation and Trainings.
3. Orient the student to the agency setting in terms of the personnel, functions, policies, and goals; clientele served; and relationship to the community and other agencies.
4. Assist the student in creating a schedule and plan for field learning.
5. Assist the student with setting appropriate learning goals and outlining these in the learning agreement.
6. Provide student with opportunities for observation and shadowing of social work and other staff.
7. Instruct / educate the student on social work practice behaviors, roles, responsibilities, and professional competencies.
8. Meet with each student a minimum of one hour per week for face-to-face supervision.
9. Monitor student hours and sign off on electronic time sheet regularly.
10. Monitor and evaluate student progress toward learning goals and professional social work practice on a consistent basis.
11. Provide regular constructive verbal feedback to students and assist student with plans to improve practice as needed.
12. Complete formal evaluation of the student’s performance at the end of each semester and provide feedback on student’s learning and progress to the Faculty Field Liaison.

Agency Task Supervisor

Some students choose to complete their field work in an agency that may not have a qualified Agency Field Instructor available to provide supervision. In these cases, agencies are asked to designate an “Agency Task Supervisor” who will help plan, assign, and coordinate learning
opportunities for the student on a day-to-day basis. As Task Supervisors do not meet the Agency Field Instructor requirements, it is essential that students have a designated Agency Field Instructor who they meet with weekly, in addition to their Agency Task Supervisor.

**Student**
Students are expected to:

1. Follow all rules, regulations, and procedures of the agency.
2. Be familiar and comply with policies and procedures outlined in the Boise State University School of Social Work Field Manual.
3. Adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and behave in accordance with professional values.
4. Fulfill commitments made to the agency.
5. Complete hours required in field and adhere to schedule determined at beginning of semester with Agency Field Instructor as to when hours will take place.
6. Notify the Agency Field Instructor in advance of any anticipated absence from field work.
7. Arrange to make up any field work time lost due to illness, family crisis, or other barriers.
8. Demonstrate motivation to learn.
9. Demonstrate mature and professional behavior.
10. Strive to provide effective and evidence-based services to clients.
11. Prepare for meetings and client contacts.
13. Actively engage with Agency Field Instructor in the development of the learning agreement.
14. Bring relevant questions to Agency Field Instructor.
15. Be open to feedback provided by Agency Field Instructor and/or Social Work faculty. Incorporate feedback into practice.

**Field Committee**
The Director of Field Education selects Agency Field Instructors, faculty, and students to serve on the Field Committee on an annual basis. The field committee meets regularly and provides input to Field staff on policies and issues related to the field program.

**VI. Field Education Placement Process**

**External Program Students**
Field placement processes are unique to each campus. If you are a student in one of the external programs (Twin Falls, Lewiston, Coeur d’Alene) - consult with your Program Coordinator for specific details on the placement process.
Boise State University Boise Campus Students: Steps for Securing Your Field Placement

Students are expected to follow the field placement process detailed below to secure a field placement. Students do not develop their own placements. All field placements must be approved by the Director of Field Education to ensure they meet the requirements of the program. Boise State University School of Social Work cannot guarantee that all students will secure a placement. If students are not able to successfully secure a placement by the 5th week in the semester, they may be required to withdraw from the social work program.

Students are expected to:

1. Attend new social work student orientation. At your program orientation, you will receive information about the Field placement process, meet Field Program staff, and receive information and training about how to login to and use the web-based Field education software program, Intern Placement Tracking, commonly referred to as IPT.
2. Read the School of Social Work Field Manual to learn about expectations, important policies and processes related to fieldwork.
3. Attend the Agency Field fair, typically held each February. The Agency Field Fair provides an important opportunity to meet representatives from agencies that offer fieldwork placements for students. We recommend you dress professionally and bring copies of your resume to provide to Agency Field Instructors.
4. Make a Field Advising appointment with the Director of Field Education or Associate Director of Field Education to discuss your learning goals and fieldwork preferences. Bring an updated resume with you to this meeting. Appointments can be scheduled via the online scheduling system on the Boise State University School of Social Work webpage. It is important that you meet with Field Program staff PRIOR to contacting agencies to set up interviews. Field staff will assist you with finding a placement that will support your ability to develop competencies and skills required for graduation.
5. Any student who has been convicted of a felony must disclose this information to the Director of Field Education. A felony involving a crime against person(s) may make placement difficult or impossible and may be grounds for exclusion from field work.
6. With input from the Director of Field Education or Associate Field Director, identify your top three agency preferences and add them to your Student Detail profile in IPT.
7. Reach out. Call or e-mail Agency Field Instructors to request the opportunity to interview for a Field Placement.
8. If you are offered a placement at one of your top three agencies, notify Field Program staff of your offer and decision to accept placement. Once you have accepted an offer - be sure to notify any other agencies you have interviewed with or contacted so they know you are no longer seeking placement.
9. If you do not receive an offer for placement after three interviews, you must schedule an appointment with the Director or Associate Director of Field Education. Field program
staff will help you identify two additional options and will assist with barriers or challenges that may be affecting your ability to secure a placement. However, if a field placement is not secured after the 5th week of the semester, the student may be dismissed from the program.

**Interviewing Tips & Resources**

It is important to put your best self forward during your interviews with agencies. You are encouraged to utilize resources available through the Boise State University Career Center and to solicit feedback on your resume or interviewing skills from social work faculty. The tips below may also be helpful:

1. Demonstrate professional behavior:
   a) Communicate respectfully via e-mail and/or phone. Return calls if messages are left for you and respond to e-mails you receive from agency personnel.
   b) Dress professionally for your interview.
2. Take a resume. Resumes should include relevant professional and volunteer experience. You may also want to include information about relevant coursework you have completed to date, as well as professional references.
3. Prepare questions: Take time to consider what you would like to ask agency personnel in order to get an understanding of what field work in their agency might be like. Some sample questions include:
   - What is the mission and purpose of your agency?
   - Who are your most common clients and what are the problems/challenges they commonly face?
   - What learning opportunities / experiences will I be able to participate in at your agency?
   - How is social work viewed in your agency? Will I be able to see a variety of social workers in practice?
   - What specific social work skills will I have the opportunity to develop in this setting?
   - How does your agency support student learning and balance the needs of the student, Agency Field Instructor, and clients?

**VII. Field Education Policies, Procedures and Guidelines**

**Placement**

**Field Placement Development**

The Director & Associate Director of Field Education have primary responsibility for selecting agencies that can provide appropriate field education experiences for students. Students do not develop their own placement opportunities, but rather work directly with the Field Director & Associate Director in identifying appropriate placements.
Difficulty Securing Placement
On occasion, students may interview at multiple agencies and not be offered a field placement. Boise State University School of Social Work cannot and does not guarantee that students will successfully secure a placement. If a student is not offered placement after three interviews, it is the student’s responsibility to schedule a Field Advising appointment to discuss barriers to placement with the Director or Associate Director of Field Education. If no match is found after three interviews, a review of the student’s appropriateness for placement will be conducted by the Field Education Department. Students that are repeatedly experiencing unsuccessful interviews may not be allowed to continue with the placement process. They might be offered the opportunity to delay placement until the following academic year. They would not be able to continue in their Seminar course work, as Field Instruction and Seminar must be taken concurrently. Students who are not offered a placement after three interviews may alternately be required to withdraw from the social work program.

Field Placement at Agency in which Student has been a Client or Where a Family Member(s) works / Dual Relationships
Boise State discourages and in most situations, will not approve placement of students in agencies where they have previously received services as a client, have been employed, or where family members or friends are employed or are receiving services. These recommendations exist to protect students, agency employees, and clients from conflicts that may arise due to dual relationships.

Guidelines for Students Considering Field Practicum at Student’s Place of Employment
Field Practicum Placement in an agency where a student is employed may be proposed by BSW or MSW students. Evaluation and approval of the proposal, to use the agency where the student is employed for a field practicum placement, is the responsibility of the Boise State University School of Social Work. The agency official with the authority to grant permission for release time for the field placement should be contacted before submitting proposals to the Director of Field Education for approval. The final proposal must be approved by both the student’s proposed Agency Field Instructor and the Director of Field Education.

General Instructions
1. The proposal must be designed in such a way that its implementation will facilitate the student's development as a professional social worker by providing opportunities to pursue and achieve the development and mastery of competencies for the BSW/MSW Curriculum in which the student is enrolled. Discuss all elements of the proposal with all parties before constructing the draft and show the draft to the agency administrator, and proposed Agency Field Instructor (or Agency Task Supervisor) before submitting it to the assigned Director of Field Education. Students in external programs will first discuss with their program coordinator before discussing with Director of Field Education.
2. The Agency must agree to comply with all practicum policies delineated in the Boise State University School of Social Work practicum field manual and Practicum Placement Agreement.

3. The Agency must agree to identify new and challenging activities for the student, outside of their normal duties, that encompass broad and transferable skills/knowledge relevant to the learning agreement core competencies.

4. The proposal may not include or in any way duplicate the roles, tasks, or responsibilities for which the student is employed by the agency.

5. The Agency must agree to release the student during his/her practicum hours to go outside the agency, if necessary, to obtain practice opportunities for these new knowledge and skills, with prior agreement by the University and the Agency.

6. The Agency must understand and accept that the time set for practicum learning is separate from regularly worked hours. Arrangements may be negotiated between the Agency, Student, and the Director of Field Education for field practicum time to be during regular work week hours or in addition to the regular work week.

7. The Agency must provide a licensed post-two-year BSW for supervision with BSW students, or a licensed post-two-year MSW for supervision with MSW or BSW students.

8. The Agency must be aware and sensitive to the potential conflicts inherent in being both a student and employee, and must be supportive of the student during the transitional period.

9. The student should review the "Request for Practicum Placement at Student’s Place of Employment" form with his/her External Coordinators and/or the Director of Field Education at the Boise State University School of Social Work. The focus of the review is to ensure there will be opportunities for the student to meet the competencies and practice behaviors specific to the curriculum the student is enrolled. The proposal must be submitted prior to the semester the proposed practicum is to begin. Students may not begin their practicum until final written approval is given by the Director of Field Education to the Faculty Field Liaison, the student, and the Agency Field Instructor.

Proposed Agency Field Instructor Approval

1. The approval and acceptance of the Agency Field Instructor (BSW/MSW, licensure and two years post-graduate practice experience are the minimum requirements) rests with the School of Social Work. Present supervisors of the student making the proposal may not be utilized as Agency Field Instructors.

2. If the proposed Agency Field Instructor is new to Boise State University, an “Agency Field Instructor Verification Form” must be completed and submitted with the proposal. This form will outline the requirements for being an approved Agency Field Instructor.

3. The proposed Agency Field Instructor must serve either in the agency of employment, be on the agency’s Board, serve as a volunteer in the organization, or be a faculty member in the School of Social Work who has been approved by the Director of Field Education to provide off-site instruction with the assistance of an on-site agency task supervisor. If a
variance is indicated, approval must come from the Director of Field Education in consultation with the BSW and/or MSW coordinator or Director of the School of Social Work.

4. The proposed Agency Field Instructor must indicate approval for the plan, including their willingness to serve as the Agency Field Instructor and to be available for practicum instruction.

**Agency Administrative Approval**

The Administrator of the agency where the student is employed, and the student's current supervisor, must indicate their approval of the proposal, including the required time for the employee to be a student in the agency, and for the person providing practicum instruction to serve as the student's Agency Field Instructor by signing the proposal.

**Submission of Proposal**

1. Students are required to first notify and discuss with the Director of Field Education that a "Request for Practicum Placement at Student’s Place of Employment" will be submitted. External program students will first notify their site coordinator and then contact the Director of Field Education.

2. Student and proposed agency will complete and submit one (1) original of the "Request for Practicum Placement at Student’s Place of Employment" with signatures to their Director of Field Education for review.

3. The Director of Field Education then reviews, approves, and signs the Placement at Student’s Place of Employment proposal.

4. The Director of Field Education gives the approved and fully executed Agency of Employment Proposals to the Field Program administrative support staff for distribution to the student’s file, the student, and one copy to the Agency Field Instructor.

**Checklist**

- Request for Practicum Placement at Student’s Place of Employment form
- Agency Field Instructor Verification Form
- Agency Signatures (Agency Administrative Supervisor, Current Workplace Supervisor, Proposed Agency Field Instructor)
- Student Signature
- Submission to Director of Field Education Boise State University, School of Social Work for review and approval. If student attends external programs then first submit to program coordinator and then to Director of Field Education.

**Credit, Attendance, and Holidays**

**Credit for Life and/or Work Experience**

Academic or Field practicum credit is not granted for life experience or professional work experience.
**Attendance**

Students are expected to be at the agency on a consistent, regular basis throughout both semesters in order to complete total field hours required. Students cannot work extra hours each week in order to finish Field Practicum early; continuity over time is a desirable developmental factor in the field experience.

**Timekeeping**

Students are expected to track all time spent at their agency. Students should utilize the electronic Time Sheet form available in IPT. In addition to listing hours worked each day, students should document a brief description of activities in the Comments section, making particular note when they complete tasks or participate in activities that are described in the learning agreement. Agency Field Instructors should verify student hours, preferably on a weekly basis, by initialing each time entry on the Time Sheet in IPT. At the end of each semester the student, Agency Field Instructor, and Faculty Field Liaison must electronically sign the IPT Time Sheet verifying that hours recorded are accurate.

**Unexpected Absences**

If students are unable to be at their field agency as scheduled for any reason, it is essential that the student discuss this with their Agency Field Instructor. Hours missed must be made up to ensure students complete the total number of hours required each semester. Extensions may be considered in extenuating circumstances, but must be approved by Faculty Field Liaison and by the Director of Field Education.

**Holidays and School Breaks**

As a general rule students are not expected to do field work during Boise State University holiday breaks or during the summer months. Boise State observes the following holidays:

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving week
- Winter break (mid-December through mid-January)
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. / Human Rights Day
- President’s Day
- Spring break

We encourage students to take a break, reconnect with family and friends, and practice self-care during holiday breaks. Holiday breaks also provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their ability to uphold professional boundaries.

In addition to the importance of self-care and rejuvenation, seminar and classes are intended to be co-requisites for student’s field work. During holiday breaks students do not have the support of faculty or classroom learning to support them in field.
There are rare exceptions where a student may need to be in field during holiday breaks in order to catch up on hours or to provide the agency with minimal support to maintain continuity of care for clients to whom students are assigned. If a student or Agency Field Instructor believes it is important for a student to be in field during a holiday break, the student must speak with their Faculty Field Liaison for approval. It is the responsibility of the Faculty Field Liaison to be available to students who are approved to work on holidays or during Boise State University breaks.

If students do work over holiday breaks, extra hours should be prorated over the following semester and not “banked” in order to finish practicum early. Agencies depend on students to be there for the duration of the school year and leaving a field placement early due to having hours “banked” is discouraged.

Student Safety and Liability

Student Safety
There are inherent risks in social work practice. Therefore, agencies, Agency Field Instructors and students are expected to collaborate to enhance safety and minimize risks in field. Agencies are expected to have written policies to address work situations that may entail risk for students. Such situations may include the following: home visits, services to clients outside the agency, services provided at night or on weekends, services to clients who may become angry or violent, exposure to pathogens or toxic substances, and services that are politically sensitive which may result in threats of violence. Agency Field Instructors are expected to orient students to their agency’s policies and practices regarding risk management and to assign students tasks which are consistent with the student’s level of competence. Students are expected to adhere to agency policies and to promptly address any concerns about their safety with their Agency Field Instructor.

The School of Social Work does not perform background checks on students prior to their field work, but agencies may have their own requirements with which students are expected to comply. Agencies may review databases such as the child abuse registry and sex offender registry. Agencies may require students undergo immunizations, drug testing and BCI (Background Criminal Investigation) checks. The costs associated with immunizations and background checks are the responsibility of the student.

Given the increase in outbreaks of old and new, more resistant strains of TB, all students should consider a medical check, especially those in institutional settings. The same may be true for Hepatitis B. Please consult with your supervisor for information on any medical procedures that are required or recommended at your agency.

Harassment
Boise State University is committed to maintaining a working and learning environment that is free of unlawful discrimination and harassment and in which every student is treated with dignity.
and respect. The University strives to create an environment that supports, encourages and rewards educational advancement on the basis of ability and performance. Accordingly, the University prohibits to the extent permitted by applicable law, discrimination and harassment against an individual on the basis of that person's race, color, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, national origin, physical or mental disability, veteran status, genetic information, or any other status protected under applicable federal, state, or local law.

If you experience harassment in your field agency, Boise State University Field Education staff are committed to investigating the situation and connecting you with needed support.

**Sexual Harassment**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX") prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities. Title IX applies to public and private educational institutions that receive federal funds— including Boise State University.

Generally, sexual harassment and sexual assault are considered discrimination on the basis of sex. Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment includes a range of behaviors from cat calling, staring at body parts, and inappropriate jokes to sexual assault and rape. The sex of the harasser and the person being harassed is irrelevant.

Unwelcome means that the person being harassed did not request or invite the behavior and regarded the conduct as undesirable or offensive. A failure to complain or flat out say “no” does not mean that the conduct was welcome. In some situations, a person may not be able to complain about unwelcome behaviors because of a power imbalance (i.e. an Agency Field Instructor and student) or because the person was drinking or scared, for example.

Title IX requires Boise State University to respond to certain harassment on the basis of sex which it knows about or reasonably should have known about. Specifically, the University must:

- Investigate what happened.
- Take appropriate steps to resolve the matter – the University must do its best to eliminate the harassment, prevent recurrence, and remedy effects even if no formal complaint has been made or when a person making a complaint does not wish to further participate in the process.
- Take interim measures during the investigation to prevent potential further harassment.

If you feel you have been discriminated against on the basis of sex in your Field setting, Boise State University has a responsibility to investigate your concern and provide you with support. If you would like to get support without filing a complaint, there are several confidential services available on the Boise State University Campus:

1. *The Women’s Center* serves the entire campus community, including people of all genders, and can provide confidential support and advocacy.
2. *University Medical Services* provides a full range of primary care, referral, and educational services. Urgent care is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

3. *University Counseling Services* provides mental health services that enhance student growth and development, help improve personal effectiveness and resilience, as well as promote student success.

**Student Professional Liability Insurance**

All social work practicum and internship students are covered by State of Idaho/Boise State University’s General Liability insurance program. Per the Idaho Tort Claims Act, specifically, Idaho Code section 6-902, Boise State University shall maintain comprehensive General Liability coverage in such amounts as are proscribed by Idaho Code section 6-924 (capped at $500,000). The University’s liability coverage shall cover the actions of University and its employees, agents, students, and faculty while acting in the course and scope of employment or as students of Institution in performing actions related to the program. Coverage is effective upon enrollment in the practicum/internship.

Additionally, Boise State University School of Social Work purchases professional insurance to cover each student while enrolled as a student in practicum/internship. The insurance coverage is provided by American Casualty Company and the liability limits are $1,000,000 each claim and $5,000,000 aggregate. The cost of this insurance coverage is included in student’s field program fees.

**Student Use of Private Vehicle**

Students are not allowed to transport clients in their own private vehicles for their own protection and for the protection of clients and agencies. If students are required to use their own vehicle to complete Field Practicum tasks and assignments (other than getting to/from work site), agencies must inform students about liability or vehicle coverage available (or not available) to them through the agency, and must provide mileage reimbursement.

If students use their own vehicle for field practicum tasks – they are encouraged to contact their vehicle insurance company to see if additional coverage is required to cover professional/work use of their vehicle.

**Student Professional Conduct**

Social Work education is preparation for professional practice. There are physical, cognitive, emotional, and character requirements for effective social work practice, in addition to compliance with social work licensing laws and ethics. Students who violate or fail to demonstrate adherence to these essential skills, values, and standards as they progress through the social work program and their field practicum may be subject to dismissal from the social work program and may be unable to secure a social work license and/or job upon graduation.
Professionalism
Students are expected to follow agency rules and policies. They are expected to be punctual and dependable. They are expected to demonstrate professional behavior in their interactions with clients, agency staff, and Boise State University faculty and staff. Students should provide services to clients that are based on relevant social work knowledge and research. Students must demonstrate an ability to prioritize responsibilities and complete assignments.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills
Students must demonstrate an ability to relate effectively to others. Compassion, objectivity, integrity, and demonstration of respect for and consideration of others are paramount. Students must be able to express ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrate an ability and willingness to listen to others.

Values
Students must demonstrate a commitment to the core values of social work including service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence.

Diversity
Social work students must value diversity. Students must serve in an appropriate manner all persons seeking assistance in their agency regardless of the client’s age, class, race, religious affiliation, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and/or value system. Students must not impose their own personal, religious, sexual and/or cultural values on others and must know how their own background and value base affect his or her interactions with clients. Students must be willing to reflect on and change their behavior when it interferes with their ability to work with a client.

Ethical Behavior
Students must abide by the ethical standards of the profession developed by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics can be found at: https://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp.

Privacy and Confidentiality
Social work students should respect and protect the privacy and confidentiality of clients. Students should not solicit private information from clients unless it is needed to provide services. Students are expected to comply with confidentially requirements outlined in agency policy, applicable laws, and the NASW Code of Ethics and only disclose client information in accordance with such policies and/or if disclosing information is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a client or other identifiable person. Students should not disclose identifying information about clients in Seminar and other classes.
Sexual Relationships and Physical Contact

Students should not engage in physical contact (such as hugging or massaging clients) with clients when there is a possibility of psychological harm to the client as a result. Students should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with current or former clients – or with other individuals with whom clients maintain close personal relationships where there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. Social work students, not their clients, assume the full burden of setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

Guidelines for Using Social Media

(These Guidelines can be found in the attachment as a separate document.*)

Social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Second Life and various blog sites are just a few examples of new and exciting ways to connect with others and share information. However, the rapid growth of social media communication tools and their ease of accessibility can also have unintended and potentially damaging consequences to users if basic guidelines are ignored. Students are expected to adhere to social work values, ethics and engage in professional conduct as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics when using social media communication tools, whether using a personal site(s), agency site(s), or University site(s).

Common issues that students need to understand, and manage, when utilizing social media include, but are not limited to, privacy and confidentiality (Section 1.07), conflicts of interest and dual relationships (Section 1.06), and informed consent (Section 1.03) in our relationships with clients, colleagues, and in our practice settings. Utilizing social media communication tools as a social work professional requires ongoing attention to these ethical challenges.

As a social work professional, it is important to consider whether you are using social media channels for professional activities, such as advancing social justice issues, advocating for vulnerable populations and promoting your professional identity, versus using these sites to maintain contact with friends and family. Your professional image, that is, the professional self you develop that is guided by social work values and ethical standards, extends beyond the field agency and physical setting of an office.

As social workers, we must be cognizant that the legal, ethical and clinical responsibilities we have as professionals and that those obligations extend to the virtual world of the Internet and include the use of social media communication tools. As with the Hippocratic oath to “first do no harm,” it is imperative to consider how to be connected within the context of social media while protecting yourself, your field site, your clients, the School of Social Work, and the profession.

As you get started in your field placement, it may be helpful to explore the following questions with your field instructor and/or task supervisor.
1. Does your field site have a policy on the use of social media communication tools? If so, review the policy with your field instructor. If not, what expectation does the agency have regarding the use of social media during field hours?

2. How much personal information is shared with clients and former clients as well as agency staff and professional colleagues?

3. What are the most common ethical concerns you should be aware of when using social media as a professional social worker?

To help facilitate these conversations, consider the following topics for discussion with your field instructor and/or task supervisor.

**What are the agency guidelines regarding the use of Facebook and who can you friend?**

Managing friend requests and maintaining privacy settings is critical regardless of whether you use social media for personal and/or professional reasons. Allowing clients, former clients, or others in your professional circle to cross into your personal life may complicate and blur your professional boundaries. This is particularly tricky when managing Facebook accounts. As a professional, you must fully consider the extent of your privacy settings, how you will manage friend requests, your level of self-disclosure, and how you will monitor wall posts or other interactions on your site.

Be aware that if you do not employ any privacy settings on your social media site, your profile is public and anyone can see what is on your page. Additionally, people can see when you are tagged in photos, view comments made by others, note your status updates, and see who you’ve friended. All professionals must evaluate the scope of their social media connections. Since this is still an emerging professional topic, some professionals may be cautious and guarded in their use of social media while others may be more open and exposed. It is your responsibility as a professional social worker to abide by the Code of Ethics, including your virtual communications and use social work values and principles to guide your interactions.

**What privacy and confidentiality concerns should I consider when texting, emailing and/or using Twitter?**

With the proliferation of hand held devices such as smart phones, iPhones, and Blackberries, accessing the Internet and connecting with others is literally in the palm of our hands. Text, email and Twitter are quick and effective ways to communicate with others however many ethical, legal, and clinical issues must be addressed when using these communication tools.

There is huge potential for unintentionally sharing protected information so always use good ethical judgment. Be cautious about discussing information about your field placement, classroom work, or agency staff. **Do not discuss confidential or private information about clients, colleagues, or agency practices even if you are disguising the information.** In general, consider the security, privacy and confidentiality of all communication methods and when in doubt, seek
consultation and supervision before embarking into unfamiliar or uncertain areas. Observe all state and federal regulations such as FERPA and HIPAA, as well as University Policy(ies).

Be aware: Employers and volunteer organizations are more frequently requesting passwords and permissions to see what is behind your privacy settings. You have the right to refuse permission. However, doing so may be a consideration in whether or not you are offered opportunities to work with them. Further, allowing organizations to see everything may also be hazardous to future opportunities. Make sure you know what’s “out there.”

Can I check my personal social media accounts during field hours?

In general, your time in field and the resources provided to you in your field placement are to be used for field related matters. Before using social media communication tools on behalf of your agency, be sure to seek approval of any messages or posts. Be careful not to endorse or promote a product, cause or position without prior approval. If you have personal sites, it is best to maintain them on your own time using your own computer.

I can’t find anything in the Code of Ethics that specifically mentions social media, so does that mean the Code of Ethics does not apply?

Absolutely not! The NASW Code of Ethics provides a variety of standards that social workers should consider when engaging in the use of social media. Here are a few examples of the Codes applicability to social media.

Standard 1.06 states that “social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships…in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client…and social workers…are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries” (1.06c) The Code goes on to note that “dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively” (1.06c) Our ethical obligations to clients, colleagues and other professionals are no different when using Facebook, Twitter or other social media channels as well as communications via our cell phones such as texting or email.

Standard 1.07(i) states that “social workers should not discuss confidential information in any setting unless privacy can be ensured.” We all know there is no such thing as privacy on a social media site or the Internet. Comments can be forwarded or copied, posts and pictures can be found on search engines years after the initial publication, and archival systems save information even after you delete it. Always consider the image you are portraying by the photos and comments you post. Understand how privacy settings work and review them regularly. Refrain from providing too much personal information such as your home address or full birth date. Don’t post in advance when you plan to be on vacation or away from home for an extended period of time. Be sure to project the image you want potential faculty members, future employers, advisors and friends to know you by.
Standard 4.03 states that “social workers should not permit their private conduct to interfere with their ability to fulfill their professional responsibilities.” Social media channels provide an excellent means to build community; however, as you navigate these channels, do no harm to yourself, your field site, your clients, the School of Social Work or to the social work profession in the process. Do not pretend to be someone else or hide your identity when using social media. Be clear if you are sharing personal views and use good judgment regarding sensitive issues. Verify information before you post it, correct mistakes in a timely manner, and be aware of legal liability issues such as copyright infringement, defamation, and posting proprietary information.

Also, see http://www.socialworkers.org/practice/standards/naswtechnologystandards.pdf for additional standards regarding social media policies provided by NASW and ASWB.

What should I do next?

Take some time to review these guidelines with your Agency Field Instructor and seek to identify other ethical standards that are applicable in your practice setting. As a social work student, you are continually developing a professional identity and you must be cognizant that your private world has a greater likelihood of becoming public when using social media. Agency Field Instructors, colleagues, and even clients may have access to information via the Internet that you would otherwise limit to your friends and families, so we encourage you to consider the personal versus professional role of social media in your life and your field setting.

Tips to maintain a positive online presence:

- **Clean up your digital dirt.** Remove any pictures, content, or links that can send the wrong message to employers. Ask yourself, "How do I show up in the world?" Try a Google search on yourself periodically to see what comes up.

- **Remember the internet is public domain.** They are called social networking sites for a reason. It is becoming commonplace for employers to do an online search for candidates before making job offers. A good guideline is to not put anything out on a social networking site that you would not want to see on the front page of the paper.

- **Use social networking sites to your advantage.** Maintain your online profile by portraying an image consistent with how you want to be perceived. Your profile is a way for you to demonstrate to employers your communication skills using proper grammar and spelling. Convey your professional image by choosing your photo and your screen name carefully. Include great references on your profile from a variety of different people to "paint" a positive professional image of yourself.

- **Using social networking sites may not be for you.** If using social media tools is not fun for you and it just feels like more work, that is O.K. These tools are not for everyone. If you are just going through the motions of putting something out there to have a presence, do not do it. Your lack of enthusiasm and lack of passion will show through, and that is
NOT the image you want to portray. Your time and energy will serve you better to focus on areas that you believe in.

- Be thoughtful about your posts. There is no expectation of privacy when using social media. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect on both you, the School of Social Work, the practicum agency and/or the University. Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created, and comments can be forwarded or copied. If you wouldn’t say it at a conference or to a member of the media, consider whether you should post it online. If you are unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, seek advice from your supervisor, Agency Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison, or the Director of Field Education.

*Based in part on guidelines from UNC Chapel Hill, & SJSU

**Effective Use of Supervision**

Students should prepare for supervision meetings in a meaningful way. Students should practice self-reflection and be prepared to share their insights with their Agency Field Instructors. Students should frequently review their learning agreements and monitor their own progress toward learning goals and mastery of social work practice behaviors and competencies. Students should be willing to share challenges, difficulties, and successes they are having in their work with clients with their Agency Field Instructors. Questions students may consider as ways to evaluate their growth and professional development include:

- Do I consistently perform as a competent, confident social worker in stressful situations?
- Do I apply knowledge from the social and behavioral sciences to my work with clients?
- Do I treat clients and colleagues respectfully and demonstrate unconditional positive regard?
- Do I respond empathetically?
- Do I demonstrate imaginative, innovative social work skills?
- Do I use data and knowledge to plan intervention strategies?
- Do I make appropriate referrals to community resources?
- Am I appropriately assertive on behalf of myself? On behalf of my profession? As an advocate for my clients?
- If a social work job was available at my agency, would I be actively recruited for the position?
- Would my supervisor write a highly positive letter of recommendation for me?
Addressing Challenges and Difficulties in Field

Problem Solving Policy:

Steps to address student challenges and concerns in field practicum
The Boise State University School of Social Work is committed to assisting students to maximize their learning opportunities and experiences in a field placement. Issues, concerns and demonstrated difficulties need to be identified and addressed in a professional manner in order to provide resolution and/or corrective actions as necessary. Participation in this process is part of the field practicum learning objectives. Every effort is made to assure that the student’s rights to due process are protected, as well as assuring the appropriate protections to agency and client interests. When a concern is identified the following sequence of activities should occur:

A) Concerns of the STUDENT about the Agency Field Instructor or Agency

1. The student will address the concerns with the Agency Field Instructor and see if the issues of concern can be worked out directly. Since the power differential between student and Agency Field Instructor can be somewhat intimidating, especially early in the practicum relationship, the student may wish to consult with her/his Faculty Field Liaison to “rehearse” how to approach the Agency Field Instructor for such a discussion.
2. If the issue at hand cannot be resolved directly with the Agency Field Instructor, the student will contact their Faculty Field Liaison and consult with him/her regarding potential arrangement of a face-to-face meeting among all concerned. External programs may need to use teleconference or video technology as a more responsive way to meet with rural agencies that may otherwise require significant travel time. Such a meeting will serve to clarify problems, discuss potential solutions, and attempt to develop a plan that will allow the practicum to go forth.
3. Should this final approach be unsuccessful, the student, Agency Field Instructor and/or Faculty Field Liaison shall inform the Director of Field Education and all parties shall meet to discuss options available to the student. For external programs a site coordinator will also be involved. If indicated, this meeting may be to arrange termination of the student placement with the agency. Termination of a field placement cannot occur unless the problem solving process has been fully utilized.
4. If appropriate, the Office of Field will work with the Faculty Field Liaison and the student (or external site program coordinator) to identify other placement options. The Office of Field cannot guarantee that a second field option will be available.

B) Concerns of the AGENCY FIELD INSTRUCTOR about the student

1. The Agency Field Instructor will address the concerns with the student and see if the issues of concern can be worked out directly. External programs may need to use teleconference or video technology as a more responsive way to meet with rural agencies that may otherwise require significant travel time. Experience with such situations
indicates that open and clear communication between the student and Agency Field Instructor often alleviates tense or problematic situations.

2. If the issue at hand cannot be resolved directly with the student, the Agency Field Instructor will contact the Faculty Field Liaison for the placement and consult with him/her about the situation. Often, this sort of strategizing can result in a resolution to the problem.

3. The Faculty Field Liaison is always available to come to the site to meet face-to-face with the student, Agency Field Instructor, and anyone else deemed appropriate. At this point, an action plan for resolving the issue will be developed and agreed to by all parties.

4. Should this final approach be unsuccessful, the student, Agency Field Instructor, and Faculty Field Liaison shall inform the Director of Field Education and meet to discuss options available to the student, and if indicated, arrange termination of the student placement with the agency. Termination of a field placement cannot occur unless the problem solving process has been fully utilized.

5. If appropriate, the Office of Field will work with the Faculty Field Liaison and the student (or external site program coordinator) to identify other placement options. The Office of Field cannot guarantee that a second field option will be available.

\( C \) Situations in which immediate suspension or termination of a placement is necessary (AGENCY DRIVEN)

In the event that an agency wishes to immediately suspend or terminate a practicum placement due to unprofessional behavior of a student, safety concerns for clients or unethical behavior of students the Agency Field Instructor is requested to:

1. Contact the Faculty Field Liaison immediately to discuss the circumstances leading to the situation.

2. The Agency Field Instructor and/or Faculty Field Liaison (or external program coordinator) will then contact the Director of Field Education to inform of the decision to terminate a student.

3. Inform the student verbally (with written follow-up) the reason for the suspension or termination.

4. Work with the Faculty Field Liaison to accomplish any follow-up activities or meetings that need to occur in order to appropriately end the placement.

5. Discuss with the Faculty Field Liaison and Director of Field Education ways in which the situation leading to the termination can be avoided in the future, and how the agency and university can work together to promote social work education.

6. If appropriate, the Office of Field will work with the Faculty Field Liaison and the student to identify other placement options. The Office of Field cannot guarantee that a second field option will be available.

7. Termination from a field placement may result in a grade of F in field, which would disallow the student to continue in the BSW or MSW program.
D) Concerns of the FACULTY FIELD LIAISON about the student

1. The Faculty Field Liaison will address any concerns with the student and see if the issues or concerns can be directly worked out.

2. If the issue at hand cannot be resolved directly with the student, the Faculty Field Liaison will notify the agency and the Director of Field Education of their concerns and a meeting will be arranged to address the Faculty Field Liaison’s concerns. External programs shall notify the site coordinator of the concern and include the site coordinator when setting up a meeting with the Director of Field Education.

3. If appropriate, the Office of Field will work with the Faculty Field Liaison and the student (or external site program coordinator) to identify other placement options. The Office of Field cannot guarantee that a second field option will be available.

E) Concerns of the FACULTY FIELD LIAISON about the agency

1. The Faculty Field Liaison will address any concerns with the agency and see if the issues or concerns can be directly worked out.

2. If the issue at hand cannot be resolved directly with the agency, the Faculty Field Liaison will notify the agency and the Director of Field Education of their concerns and a meeting will be arranged to address the Faculty Field Liaison’s concerns. External programs shall notify the site coordinator of the concern and include the site coordinator when setting up a meeting with the Director of Field Education.

3. If appropriate, the Office of Field will work with the Faculty Field Liaison and the student (or external site program coordinator) to identify other placement options.

F) Termination of Students from Practicum

Practicum history indicates that some students experience significant challenges in the development of professional behavior and identity. Students in field practicum are expected to demonstrate professional behavior, attitude, and demeanor in their practicum agency and in their community. Occasionally serious situations occur in which students fail significantly to adhere to key professional expectations. Failure to adhere to these professional expectations can result in termination of field practicum and/or removal from the BSW/MSW program. These professional expectations mandate students to:

1. Demonstrate respect, empathy, and tolerance with peers, colleagues, and clients;
2. Utilize an assertive and direct style of communication, both verbally and non-verbally;
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the student’s role within the formalized structure of the organization;
4. Use established lines of authority appropriately within the organization;
5. Seek guidance from the student’s identified Agency Task Supervisor/Agency Field Instructor and prepare for scheduled supervisory sessions;
6. Comply with Agency Field Instructor’s directives and utilize supervisor feedback;
7. Dress and act in compliance with Agency protocol;
8. Respect the principle of confidentiality at all levels within and outside the Agency;
9. Give precedence to professional responsibilities over personal concerns;
10. Model a strengths-based perspective in professional interactions;
11. Respect and use established protocol as outlined in the practicum manual;
12. Practice in conformance with the NASW Code of Ethics; and
13. Be truthful with information to clients, Agency Task Supervisor, Agency Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison, and the Director of Field Education.

VIII. Resources for Students

Self-Care
Practitioners in helping professions, therapists, case managers, and child welfare workers, often realize that the act of attending to individuals, families, and groups experiencing traumatic events in their lives can lead to diminished well-being of the practitioner’s health, both emotionally and physically. In some instances, practitioners may experience burn out, secondary traumatic stress, compassion fatigue, or vicarious trauma. These conditions not only place the practitioner at risk, but also the clients they serve. It is important that students begin to develop self-care strategies early on as they develop toward being a professional social worker as ways to mitigate the impacts of burn out, secondary traumatic stress, compassion fatigue, or vicarious trauma as a professional.

The most important strategy to prevent these conditions is to employ a triad of psychoeducation, skills training and supervision. As practitioners gain awareness of indirect trauma exposure hazards, they are better equipped to utilize prevention strategies to reduce risk and increase resiliency. Participation in self-care groups, balancing caseload, rest, proper nutrition and exercise, and other stress reducing activities are suggestions to prevent indirect trauma.

Professional self-care is a critical component to maintain ethical and professional behavior as well as provide competent services to diverse clientele. NASW supports self-care programs utilized to strengthen the helping profession and preserve the integrity of work with clients across diverse setting. Social workers can initiate self-care through policies, evaluations, supervision, and debriefing after stressful events. Agencies may also employ the use of staff retreats, team building focused on staff rejuvenation, or actively sponsoring healthy lifestyle initiatives within the work environment. Plans should also include activities that enhance coping mechanisms directly related to the management of the organization and the impact on workforce functioning.

For more information and additional resources about the importance of self-care, visit:

- proqol.org/
- socialwork.buffalo.edu/students/self-care/
Disability Resource Center
drc.boisestate.edu

If you have a disability or think you may have a disability that may impact your field experience, support and resources are available. The Disability Resource Center is responsible for ensuring that Boise State University maintains an educationally and physically open, accessible environment for students with disabilities. The Disability Resource Center helps Boise State achieve its goal of embracing diversity by providing access and facilitating independence. More information is available by calling: 426-1683.

CARE Team (Campus Assessment, Resource, and Education)
care.boisestate.edu

Boise State University is committed to providing a quality learning environment. Living, learning, and working at Boise State can be stressful and sometimes the reason behind someone who is disruptive, threatening or irrational. The CARE Team provides assistance to the university community to help assess and find solutions for managing distressing, disturbing, disruptive, and dangerous behaviors. If you find yourself in distress or are concerned about another student’s behavior, the CARE program is available to help.

Career Center
career.boisestate.edu

The Career Center is committed to assisting Boise State University students and alumni as they make decisions about their futures through our career planning and development programs and employment services. Our purpose is to facilitate positive partnerships and engagement opportunities among students, alumni, and employers in our community and beyond. We assist students in:

1. Planning and implementing career objectives
2. Finding student employment and experiential education opportunities
3. Meeting their post graduate career goals

Boise State Health Services
healthservices.boisestate.edu

Counseling Center

The role of Counseling Services at Boise State University is to provide mental health services that enhance student growth and development, help improve personal effectiveness and resilience, as well as promote student success. Counseling Services help you tap into your strengths and find resources to deal more effectively with concerns that impact your pursuit of
personal and academic goals. The Counseling center provides a broad spectrum of short-term counseling, consultative, evaluative, teaching, and training functions. Their staff consists of psychologists, counselors, social workers, marriage and family therapists, and closely supervised graduate students.

**Health Coaching**
As a complement to other health services, health coaching is a personalized approach to behavior change. Through client-centered goal setting, individuals are empowered to improve their health and wellness. Our health coaches will guide, motivate, and provide resources while helping clients set SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time specific) goals.

**Massage Program**
The Medical Massage Program offers therapeutic massage to patients referred by a Health Center medical provider. Medical massage is a viable and non-invasive treatment option for conditions that are scientifically known to benefit from massage techniques applied in a skilled, therapeutic fashion under the supervision of mid-level provider or physician. Massage appointments are billed directly to the student’s health insurance plan at the current rate of reimbursement. However, if the massage is not covered by their insurance, the student will be directly billed.

**Office of the Dean of Students**
deanofstudents.boisestate.edu

The Office of the Dean of Students provides a variety of services designed to support student success and engagement at Boise State University. They play a significant role in supporting and empowering students and their families during difficult times. Contact them for friendly assistance and referrals to other vital campus resources.

Case management provides early intervention and support to Boise State students experiencing difficulties or distress, such as juggling a demanding schedule. Depending on individual needs, the case manager can coordinate services on and off campus to help address struggles and reduce the negative impact on the student and the greater campus community. In addition to developing a coordinated needs assessment, the case manager assists with:

- Navigating Resources
- Solving Problems
- Resolving Conflict
- Follow-up services

**Boise State Campus Recreation**
rec.boisestate.edu

Full-time student membership costs are included in student fees paid to the university.
ASBSU Legal Services
osrr.boisestate.edu/asbsu-legal-services

The Associated Students of Boise State University (ASBSU) provides FREE ATTORNEY CONSULTATIONS with a local private lawyer for most legal problems you may have. This service is available to all eligible students of Boise State. Check the website for a list of topics discussed.

IX. Resources for Agency Field Instructors

Best Practices for Agency Field Instructors: Effective Field Instruction requires time, commitment, and skills. Agency Field Instructors are encouraged to seek out opportunities to improve their teaching and supervision skills provided by Boise State University and in the community. Effective Agency Field Instructors:

- Are available and accessible to the student
- Are responsive to student feelings
- Serve as positive role models
- Clarify and structure the learning experience and roles
- Observe student’s work
- Provide feedback, monitor and evaluate student performance and progress
- Encourage student self-development and self-awareness
- Challenge students’ attitudes that are not in harmony with social work values
- Provide information, suggest solutions, teach specific skills and techniques, and orient students to the agency.
- Share their own experiences with students
- Assist with problem solving
- Assist students in reframing feelings regarding clients and decision-making
- Allow appropriate student autonomy for learning


Agency Field Instructors should be mindful of student learning and aware that learning is a process. The following are recommended tasks Agency Field Instructors complete during different aspects of the student’s learning experience.

Before Practicum Begins

Determine expectations and necessary skills
When interviewing students – be clear about expectations that will be placed on them in the agency and minimum knowledge and skills required to be successful. Ask students what they
would expect of you, as the Agency Field Instructor, and describe your supervision/teaching style so you both can start with clear expectations.

**Develop Orientation Plan**
A thorough orientation is critically important in setting up students for success. See orientation tips and checklist included in this manual for suggestions on what to include in an orientation.

**When Practicum Begins**

**Review expectations**
Have open, honest dialogue with your student about what is expected of him or her, and discuss appropriate role and boundaries for students in your agency.

**Schedule supervision meetings**
Schedule and emphasize the importance of weekly, one-on-one, face-to-face supervision meetings.

**Provide thorough orientation to the agency**
Plan and identify activities that will help your student get to know agency staff, become aware of key agency functions and techniques, and to identify and prioritize skills and knowledge that will help them be successful.

**Relationship Development**
Get to know your student and work to build trust, rapport, and a professional relationship. Assess student’s skill and confidence level. Discuss their preferred learning style. Be aware of any information about the student that may impact their work in the agency and provide support as needed.

**Assist Student with Completion of Learning Agreement**
Students are expected to assume primary responsibility for identifying learning activities that will help them develop practice skills and competencies. As students may have a limited understanding of opportunities available to them in your agency, please take the time to review the learning agreement together and to help students brainstorm, identify, and personalize meaningful learning activities.

**Task Assignment**
As you ask students to complete tasks, be sure to clarify the purpose of assignments. Help them understand why it is important for them to complete the task. Provide sufficient instructions and support. Allow students to shadow or work collaboratively with you early in their practicum experience. Provide early opportunities for client contact.

**Discuss Problem-Solving Model of your Agency and of Boise State University**
Help students understand how they should approach problems they may encounter during practicum. In addition, be up-front with students about what steps you will take if concerns arise
about their performance in field. The Problem Solving Policy in this manual outlines steps we expect students and Agency Field Instructors to take if problems arise and provides a good basis for discussion.

**During Supervision Sessions**

- Review student’s time sheet on ITP. Initial time entries on a weekly basis. Sign completed time sheet at the end of each semester.
- Review student’s current workload/caseload and adjust demands on student as/if needed.
- Clarify performance expectations as/if needed. Provide clear and consistent feedback.
- Encourage student to reflect on progress toward development of practice behaviors and competencies.
- Review student’s Learning Agreement and progress toward completion of learning activities and goals.
- Provide concise, direct, constructive, timely, and balanced feedback.
- Discuss and promote healthy boundaries and self-care practices.
- Assist student in exploring and clarifying personal values.
- Discuss ethical concerns and demonstrate use of ethical decision-making models.
- Assist student with integration of theory with practice.

**When Concerns Arise**

- Address concerns promptly from a strengths-based approach.
- Refer and utilize Field Problem Solving Policy.
- Get input from other agency staff and supervisors.
- Consult in a timely manner with the student’s Faculty Field Liaison.
- Refer students to support services (counseling, academic supports) as needed
- Document concerns, how they are being addressed, and the consequences of not meeting expectations, including timelines.
- Maintain ongoing collaboration and communication with student’s Faculty Field Liaison and/or Director or Associate Director of Field Education.

**Orientation Tips**

Students benefit from a structured, planned orientation. Orientation plans should include:

**Discussion of Expectations**

Schedule, agency dress code, how student should identify him/herself to clients and agency staff, and appropriate roles and boundaries for the student should be discussed.

**Tour of Physical Space**

Make sure students know where staff restrooms, break room, and other important areas are located. Be sure to provide a space for students to store their personal belongings. In large agencies or hospitals, providing a map or floor plan can be helpful.
**Introductions to Agency Staff**
Introducing students to staff early in their field experience can help students feel they are important to the agency as a whole. You may want to consider having students meet with different staff during their orientation to get acquainted and to learn about the different roles staff have in the agency. Including students in staff meetings (as possible) can be a good way for students to learn about decision-making processes, staff dynamics, and agency leadership.

**Safety and Emergency Procedures**
Student should review agency policies relevant to student/staff and client safety. Students should be provided with instructions on how to contact Agency Field Instructor or another staff person should an emergency arise.

**Agency Mission, Organizational Structure, and Governance**
Assist students with understanding the agency’s mission, program objectives, and role in the service delivery system and larger community. Provide students with an organizational chart and discuss roles of different staff members, Board of Directors, and other important stakeholders. Discuss funding sources for agency operations.

**Agency Policy and Procedure**
Students should review and discuss key policies and procedures that govern the agency including but not limited to: confidentiality (HIPAA), client eligibility for services, informed consent, and professional conduct.

**Service Delivery Models, Methods, and Guiding Theories**
Students should read about and discuss primary models and methods used by the agency (e.g. case management, peer support) as well as discussing and learning about theories that guide the agency’s work (e.g. strengths-based practice, cognitive-behavioral therapy). Program evaluations and annual reports can provide students with information about the effectiveness of the agency’s work.

**Client Assessments and Case Studies**
It can be very helpful for students to review completed client assessments and review case files. A case review can provide an opportunity to discuss common presenting concerns of clients, interventions utilized, and documentation expectations and format.

**Where Can I Find?**
Make sure students know where to locate information such as telephone numbers for agency staff, community resource information, location of client files and client contact information.
Appendix – Forms and Policies
Click on the link to download the form from the School of Social Work website.

Agency Affiliation Agreement

Agency Field Instructor Verification Form

BSW Sample Learning Agreement

MSW Foundation Sample Learning Agreement

MSW Advanced Sample Learning Agreement

Guidelines for Students Considering Field Practicum at Place of Employment

Field Performance Improvement Plan

Site Visit Form

Sample MSW Advanced Field Evaluation Form